

The numbers tell the story. The Republican majority is proposing a \$17 billion increase to the defense budget while slashing funding in every other appropriations bill. At \$649 billion, the Pentagon's budget amounts to more government spending than all other Federal agencies combined and accounts for over 50 percent of all discretionary spending in the Federal budget. The party that lectures endlessly about deficit reduction, cutting government spending and shrinking the size of government is increasing the Federal Government's largest spending category.

Republicans claim these increases in defense spending are essential for national security. But Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Mike Mullen doesn't agree. In fact, Admiral Mullen is making the opposite argument, saying the Pentagon has not been forced to cut unnecessary or ineffective spending. In an April 28, 2011 speech in Washington, he said: "with the increasing defense budget, which is almost double, it hasn't forced us to make the hard trades. It hasn't forced us to prioritize. It hasn't forced us to do the analysis. And it hasn't forced us to limit ourselves . . ."

Since 2001, the Pentagon's budget has increased by seventy percent. The enormous size and rapid growth of the defense budget means that any Member of Congress who is not working to cut the defense budget is not serious about deficit reduction.

Mr. Speaker, I am serious about confronting the fiscal crisis facing America. And, as an appropriator, I take seriously my job of eliminating unnecessary spending and ineffective programs in every appropriations bill and every Federal agency—including the Department of Defense.

That is why I reviewed the 2012 defense budget to identify spending cuts that would promote fiscal responsibility without compromising national security. During debate on H.R. 2219, I offered three amendments to accomplish this goal. The first of these amendments cuts \$124.8 million from the Pentagon's \$324.8 million budget for military bands. The second cuts \$150 million for the military's Task Force for Business and Stability Operations in Afghanistan which supports business development, not a core function of the Defense Department, including such initiatives as sourcing cashmere for New York fashion designer Kate Spade. Finally, my third amendment limits taxpayer dollars being spent by the military to sponsor NASCAR, the National Hot Rod Association, and other motorsports racing teams to \$20 million, down from an estimated \$63 million.

Military music. Mission creep. Corporate handouts. That is what my amendments target for cuts. The dollar savings from my amendments are modest by Pentagon standards. Still, in the midst of a fiscal crisis, I feel a responsibility to cut spending that is not central to the military's core mission of protecting the American people. Based on all the anti-spending rhetoric from House Republicans, the American people may expect strong bipartisan support for these ideas. Instead, with America watching, Republicans fiercely opposed my common-sense spending reductions.

My Republican colleagues argued that limiting spending on military bands to \$200 million next year would be "highly detrimental to our armed forces." Republican Members claimed my amendment to limit taxpayer sub-

sidies for NASCAR to \$20 million "may result in thousands of young Americans missing out on the chance to serve our nation in uniform, earn G.I. Bill benefits and ultimately attain a college degree." These wildly inflated claims have no relationship with reality or national security.

Most disappointing, some House Republicans dismissed my amendments as insignificant reductions in the context of the overall budget. But that is not the "every dollar counts" approach they took when slashing funding for domestic agencies. Republicans justified their \$35 million cut to food safety by arguing it was imperative for deficit reduction. My \$124.8 million savings in the military band budget is much larger—and it won't put America's children at increased risk of food-borne illness.

Representative BARNEY FRANK offered House Republicans the opportunity to vote for the significant budget savings they claimed to seek. The Frank amendment cut the proposed increase in the Pentagon budget by half. I strongly supported this amendment to save taxpayers approximately \$8 billion and force the Pentagon to do what Admiral Mullen has not yet been asked to do: analyze, prioritize and make tough choices in a time of fiscal crisis. But Republicans overwhelmingly voted to defeat the Frank amendment when it failed 181–244.

The debate on the Fiscal Year 2012 Defense Appropriations bill (H.R. 2219) should be a wake up call for America about Republican hypocrisy. The Republicans' fight to protect wasteful subsidies in defense while cutting programs that protect American families from deadly outbreaks reveals they are not opposed to government spending—only the spending they don't like. The opposition to deficit reducing amendments that I and other Democrats offered shows House Republicans aren't opposed to growing the size of government—as long as that growth occurs at the Pentagon, in the tax code, and other areas they support.

Seventy-three amendments were offered to H.R. 2219. Only one amendment to reduce spending in this \$649 billion bill was approved by the House—my amendment to cut \$124.8 million from the military band budget. Some of my colleagues called it a symbolic victory. I see it as a symbol of a much bigger problem.

Staring in 2001, wasteful tax cuts and two wars gave America the fiscal crisis we face today. Admiral Mullen has testified to Congress the nation's dire financial outlook is "our biggest national security threat." America finds itself confronting a strange reality of needing to cut the Pentagon to secure the country.

Without Republican support for cuts to defense spending, it will be almost impossible to put the country back on a sustainable fiscal course. But if my Republican colleagues will fight to protect \$324.8 million for military bands it is unlikely Congress will have the votes to make much harder choices on Pentagon reforms that produce significant deficit reduction, such as repositioning our forces in Europe, cutting failed weapons programs, or updating our nuclear weapons strategy. And if the Tea Party-controlled House rejects my attempt to limit taxpayer spending on racecar decals and drivers to \$20 million, Americans should question the Republican majority's commitment to deficit reduction.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in opposing H.R. 2219.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. CAROLYN MCCARTHY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 18, 2011

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably absent on July 11, 2011. Had I been present, I would have voted on the following: rollcall No. 534—on agreeing to the amendment (Tierney)—"aye;" rollcall No. 535—on agreeing to the amendment (Graves)—"nay;" rollcall No. 536—on agreeing to the amendment (Scalise)—"aye;" rollcall No. 537—on agreeing to the amendment (Woodall)—"nay;" rollcall No. 538—on agreeing to the amendment (McClintock)—"nay".

GOOD LUCK TO THE 2011 SOLAR CAR CHALLENGE TEAMS

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 18, 2011

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and welcome the 2011 Solar Car Challenge taking place in the 26th Congressional District at Texas Motor Speedway over four days: Monday, July 18th through Thursday, July 21. The 16th annual Solar Car Challenge is a solar-powered car race for high school students. This year's challenge is a four-day closed track race that provides high school students from across the country a hands-on experience in designing, engineering, building, and racing their own roadworthy solar cars.

Each event is the end product of a two year education cycle. On odd-numbered years, the race is a cross-country event. On even-numbered years, the event is a track race around the 1.5 mile oval at Texas Motor Speedway. The team driving the most laps accumulated over the four days of racing will be declared the winner.

I am proud that out of the sixteen teams participating in this year's challenge, two are from my congressional district. Racing in "Cat 2.0", the Bobcats Solar Racing Team of Byron Nelson High School in Trophy Club is captained by Matthew Klauser; their advisor is Darren Klauser. Liberty Christian School in Argyle will be racing in "Aurora"; their team captains are Cameron Balkey and Preston Collins; advisor is Ken Marko.

I would like to salute Dr. Lehman Marks, the Solar Car Challenge Event Coordinator, as well as all the Solar Car Teams' advisors, captains, and members who were instrumental in the support and building of these remarkable vehicles.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly rise today to commend the hard-working and visionary students comprising the Solar Car Challenge Teams and wish them a great competition. It is an honor to have this event take place within the 26th District at Texas Motor Speedway for the sixth time.